CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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24 July 1997

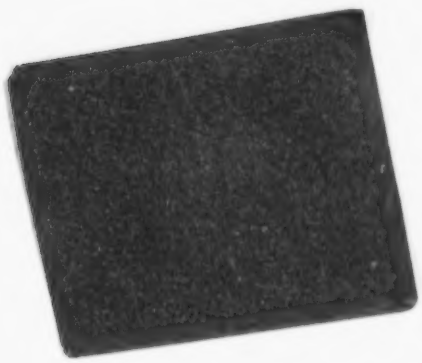
Original: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 22 JULY 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF INDONESIA ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT TRANSMITTING A PRESS RELEASE ISSUED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF INDONESIA ON 18 JULY 1997 CONCERNING THE SUBCRITICAL NUCLEAR WEAPON EXPERIMENT CONDUCTED BY THE US GOVERNMENT ON 2 JULY 1997

I have the honour to forward herewith the unofficial translation of the Press Release issued by the Government of the Republic of Indonesia on 18 July 1997 concerning the subcritical nuclear weapon experiment conducted by the US Government on 2 July 1997.

I would be grateful if this Press Release could be registered as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament and distributed for information to all members and non-members States participating in the work of the Conference.

(Signed) : Agus Tarmidizi
Ambassador
Permanent Representative



Unofficial Translation

PRESS RELEASE

1. The Government of the Republic Indonesia expresses its deep concern over the subcritical underground nuclear weapon experiment conducted by the US administration on 2 July 1997. Even though in legal terms such an experiment is not prohibited by the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), signed on 24 September 1996, the conduct of that experiment is in principle inconsistent with the "faith and spirit" enshrined in the treaty. Furthermore, such an experiment is not conducive to the ongoing efforts to achieve a general and complete disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament, which in this post Cold War era is being consistently pursued by all nations.

2. Although the experiment was said to be primarily aimed at enhancing safety and reliability, its other purpose was undoubtedly to increase the quality of the existing nuclear weapons. The conduct of such an experiment could encourage other technologically advanced countries to follow suit and would therefore undermine the objective and purpose of the CTBT. All the signatory states of the CTBT admitted that the ultimate goals of this treaty are to limit the development and qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons, to end the development of advanced new types of nuclear weapons, to contribute to the prevention of nuclear proliferation and to strengthen international peace and security.

3. During the early stages of the CTBT negotiations, the government of Indonesia had firmly stated its position that the treaty should also cover the prohibition of subcritical experiment. However, in the spirit of compromise and for the sake of consensus Indonesia had eventually withdrawn this position. Therefore such an experiment whisch had been carried out undermined Indonesia's spirit of cooperation which was clearly evident during the conclusion of the CTBT negotiation.

4. In view of the above, the government of the Republic of Indonesia appeals to the US administration to reconsider its decision and to cancel the series of such subcritical experiments which had been planned. At the same time the government of Indonesia also appeals to other countries to apply self-restraint in this matter. Indonesia is fully confident that the prevention of nuclear weapons proliferation as well as complete nuclear disarmament can be achieved only with full commitment and good-will of all states, in particular the nuclear weapon states.

Jakarta, 18 July 1997